

vol. LI no. 223 (June 1939)

ARTHUR VERYAN STEPHENS (B.A. 1930), Fellow, second son of Mr and Mrs A. J. Stephens, of Hurtmere, Godalming, to JANE DOWS LESTER AMES, only daughter of the late Dr F. W. Lester, of Pasadena, California—on 20 December 1938, in New York.

JOHN CHARLES HALLAND HOW (B.A. 1903), Bishop of Glasgow, to BARBARA COLLCUTT, daughter of the late Dr A. M. Colcutt, of Brighton—on 31 January 1939, in Glasgow.

WILLIAM ALEXANDER ELLIOTT (B.A. 1931), son of Mr W. Elliott, of London, to DOROTHY MARGARET REID, daughter of Mr P. Reid, of Harrow—on 9 April 1938, at St Mary's Church, Finchley.

GILBERT HENRY PHELPS (B.A. 1937) to DOROTHY ELIZABETH COAD, second daughter of Mr William Coad, of Cavendish Avenue, Cambridge—on 11 April 1939, at Emmanuel Congregational Church, Cambridge.

WILLIAM ALEXANDER LAW (B.A. 1932), only son of Mr and Mrs James Law, of Lee Green, London, to BERYL DYSON, only daughter of Mr Taylor Dyson, headmaster of King James's Grammar School, Almondbury—on 22 April 1939, at All Hallows' Church, Almondbury, Huddersfield.

KOMAIR LATIFI (B.A. 1933), elder son of Alma Latifi (B.A. 1901), C.I.E., to TAHIRA, second daughter of Khan Fazl Muhammad Khan (B.A. 1905), of Hoshiarpur and Hyderabad, Deccan.

LAURENCE STEVENSON PORTER (B.A. 1933), elder son of Mr and Mrs T. L. D. Porter, of Ilford, Essex, to MARIAN WINFIELD, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs T. W. Winfield, of Croxley Green, Hertfordshire—on 10 June 1939, at Croxley Green Methodist Church.

MICHAEL EDWARD MCCORMICK (B.A. 1930), rector of Bilsthorpe, Nottinghamshire, younger son of the late Very Rev. J. Gough McCormick (B.A. 1896), sometime Dean of Manchester, to RACHEL AUDREY HOARE, eldest daughter of Major-General Lionel Hoare, of Brechin Place, S.W.—on 19 June 1939, at Chelsea Old Church.

DAVID HENRIQUES VALENTINE (B.A. 1933) to JOAN WINIFRED only daughter of Mr and Mrs J. J. Todd of Dorking, Surrey, on 21 March 1938, at Reigate.

## OBITUARY

### ERNEST HANBURY HANKIN

**E**RNEST HANBURY HANKIN who died in March 1939, was born at Ware in 1865, a son of the Rev. D. B. Hankin, later Vicar of St Jude's, Mildmay Grove, North London. He was at Merchant Taylors' School from 1875 to 1882, when he entered St Bartholomew's Hospital as a medical student, continuing there till he matriculated at St John's in 1886. These years in the Hospital engendered a strong interest in bacteriology, and he decided to relinquish medical qualifications in order to commence research as soon as he had taken his degree at Cambridge. He was elected a Scholar in July 1888, after a First Class in Natural Sciences. He also took a First in Part II of the Tripos, with Physiology as his principal subject, in the following year. In 1890 he was elected Hutchinson Student in Pathology and admitted a Fellow in November 1890. He proceeded to M.A. in 1893, and took the Sc.D. degree in 1905. On passing the first part of his tripos he commenced research in the Pathological Laboratory under Professor Charles Roy, and commenced the output of papers on bacteriology which soon marked him out as a worker possessed of much originality and discernment. As early as 1886 he had devised a new and very useful method of staining bacteria by anilin dyes, and down to 1893 he published work on anthrax (in part in collaboration with F. F. Westbrook), immunity, and in particular on the complemental blood bodies then known as "alexins", the knowledge of which he advanced considerably.

The years of his Fellowship were spent only partly in Cambridge, for he worked also under Koch in Berlin and under Pasteur in Paris. In October 1892 he accepted the post of Chemical Examiner, Government Analyst and Bacteriologist to the United Provinces and Punjaub, with a head laboratory at Agra. On arrival he found himself confronted by the conventional official belief that some kind of "miasma" was the chief cause of cholera epidemics. With characteristic energy he commenced and maintained an exposition that micro-organisms were the real cause, to which he added demonstrations of his methods of combating cholera. He was thus quickly in conflict with official circles, whereupon he published his opinions in book form translated into many Indian languages, and he gave innumerable demonstrations to native audiences. Eventually success came to his long-maintained fight for the general use of permanganate of potash for purifying wells; this procedure was established officially, with the result of saving thousands of lives.

When an epidemic of cholera or bubonic plague broke out in Bombay he moved there, where one rather anxious task was the treatment of vultures of the Towers of Silence overcome by surfeit. During his thirty years in India, Hankin published many papers on oriental diseases due to micro-organisms, on the effects of opium and cobra poisoning, and on other subjects, works in the main by himself, a few in collaboration with well-known authorities such as Calmette and Haffkine. Like some of his own earlier work, certain of these papers appeared in French and German journals of pathology. Beyond the tasks connected with his post, his catholic interests found expression on such subjects as the special fauna inhabiting the great domes of the Taj Mahal, the flight of dragon-flies, and native folk-lore, and his *Methods of Design in Indian Art*, produced under the direction of Sir George Birdwood, then in charge of research in native art, is an admirable analysis of geometrical patterns based on the paintings in the Taj and other monuments. Mark Twain has recalled, in his book of travel in the East, how greatly Hankin interested him, and his surprise to learn, as he put it, that the Ganges is so full of bacteria waging war on each other that its waters are probably a less deadly beverage than is generally supposed. On his retirement in 1922 Hankin received the Kaiser-i-Hind Medal of the first class.

On his return home, he lived for a time in the Norfolk Broads, beloved in early days, but the winters soon sent him to Torquay, Newquay and finally Brighton. In his leisure he published several books, among which his *Animal Flight* is a lasting record of his remarkable powers of observation, though in its lack of modern mathematical and physical treatment some of his provisional theories have not found acceptance. *Common Sense and its Cultivation* (1926) is a thoughtful study which shows, as a recent account of him says, "how closely and sympathetically he had studied the European and Oriental attitudes of mind". *The Pied Piper of Hamlyn and the Coming of the Black Death* is a fascinating essay linking up folk-lore and medical history which, through being published locally, missed the wider attention it deserved. There is no space for mention of his other books; all are written brightly and deal ingeniously with various problems. Hankin was a man of great sympathy for others, and suffering in men or animals affected him much; his friendships were lasting. As an undergraduate his tendency to explain everything scientifically and thus to justify methods evoked by his ingenious mind soon attracted attention and often caused much amusement. His friends used to say, with some justice, that he regarded himself as "the experimental animal". His "improved method" of lighting bonfires in

College after bumps attracted the serious attention of the Dean on an occasion when eight conflagrations broke out simultaneously in the New Court.

He came from hospital work with a great belief in drugs, and he had the reputation of doubling any dose prescribed for himself. In this connection his therapeutic measures to improve his rowing power in a certain Lent Boat were not attended with marked success; and how he scorched himself by overheating a cannon-ball which he used to roll on his body to aid digestion was for some time a tale in College. During his hospital days, he and two friends fitted out an old boat as a steam launch for inland navigation, constructing the engine from fragments picked up anywhere: finding the boiler too low, Hankin's suggestion, to avoid the hire of a crane, that they should make fast to Blackfriars Railway Bridge for tidal rise and fall, a quite illegal proceeding, was carried out successfully in the hours of darkness. Later on, when he had commenced research as a Fellow, his dissections in his rooms in E New Court gave rise to mild protests during one warm Long Vacation; and it was somewhat startling to open his door and be met by a *posse* of rabbits hopping about and to hear: "Don't touch them, my dear fellow, they're all injected with anthrax." Before writing a paper on his work, he used to spend a long evening over the Bible and Stevenson's *New Arabian Nights*, "to get some real English back into my head". He was very fond of boat sailing, and was one of W. B. Hardy's (later Sir William Hardy) old sea crew, and his methods of combating sea-sickness excited admiration and amusement. Much interested in the possibilities of the "umbrella sail" of Pilcher (of gliding fame) and Wilson, Hankin and Professor Roy constructed the "Bacillus" in the Pathological Laboratory, a raft of iron rods buoyed by kerosene tins. In this curious craft they put out to sea from Colwyn Bay under an umbrella sail, an adventure which ended in foundering and rescue by the spectators. Hankin's life was a happy one to the end: he had the quality of endearing himself to his friends by his sympathetic nature, and the power of entertaining himself by problems both old and new.

H. H. B.

WALTER ATKINS (B.A. 1881) died at Oxford 26 February 1939, aged 80. He was the son of Francis Thomas Atkins, chemist, and was born at Woolwich 11 July 1858. He came up to St John's from the City of London School in 1877. He was ordained by the Bishop of Lichfield in 1883 and, after holding curacies in London and elsewhere, was presented in 1907 to the rectory of Hinxworth, Hertfordshire, where he remained until his retirement in 1932.